

Remarks

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 11 have been amended.

The Examiner has rejected applicant's claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Naruse, et al. patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,312,168). With respect to applicant's claims, as amended this rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the lens apparatus according to independent claim 1, a driving member (barrier ring 181) rotates in one direction and moves to a position corresponding to the open position of the barrier member by an energizing member (opening spring 182), which energizes in one direction. The driving member also rotates in another direction to move the barrier member to a closed position. on (first cam face 147n). In addition, a barrel (second rectilinear barrel 147) has a first guide portion (second cam face 147p) so that the driving member is forced to rotate in one direction and moves to a position corresponding to the open position in case the energizing member cannot energize, such as when the energizing member is clogged with dirt, and a second guide portion (first cam face 147n) for rotating the driving member in the other direction. (Application, par. [0169]-[0176], pgs. 41-43).

Independent claim 3 recites a first guide portion of a barrel rotates a driving member in one direction and a second guide portion of a barrel rotates the driving member in another direction. (Application, par. [0214]-[0220]). Independent claims 5 and 7 recite a lens holding member (lens holder 402) rotates in one direction and another direction by a first guide portion (second lens cam face 147u) and a second guide portion (first lens cam face 147t) of the barrel (see, FIGS. 23-25). Finally, independent claim 11, recites a structure in which a first guide portion is formed along a second guide portion.

Applicant's independent claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 11 have been further amended to better recite the first and second guide portions. In particular, each claim now sets forth that the length of the first guide portion in the direction of the optical axis is shorter than that of the second guide portion.

Such constructions are not taught or suggested by the cited Naruse, et al. patent. In particular, the Examiner has argued with respect to this patent as follows:

"Naruse discloses . . . a 'barrel which is constructed around the optical axis . . . (see 109 of Figs. 9 and 11-13); and wherein the barrel has a 'first guide portion that rotates the driving member member in one direction' (see 109c of Figs. 9 and 11 and 123c of Figs. 12 and 13), and a 'second guide portion that rotates the driving member in the other direction while resisting an energizing force of the energizing member according to a relative position change with the driving member' (see 109b of Figs. 9 and 11 and 23b of Figs. 12 and 13) . . ."

Looking closely at the Naruse, et al. patent, applicant disagrees with the Examiner's above interpretation of the patent. In the Naruse, et al. structure, the opening and closing of the lens cover occurs by the guide pin 103d sliding against the side wall surface 109e of the tapered segment 109d of the guide groove 109a of the straight key ring 109. This occurs by linear back and forth movement of the key ring and results in rotation of the lens cover switching ring 103 in opposite directions. The lens cover close guide member 109b and lens cover open guide member 109c of the guide groove 109a, in turn, have side wall surfaces that are in line with the back and forth direction of movement of the key ring 109. Sliding of the guide pin 103d along these walls of these areas, thus, while it maintains the lens cover closed and opened, respectively, does not result in further rotation of the lens cover switching ring 103. Likewise, the side wall 109f is in line with this back and forth direction of movement and could not result in rotation of the lens cover ring 103.

Finally, the description in the patent at column 15, lines 14-20, states that "it is acceptable that the width of the guide groove 109e is the same width per se, for example, in such a manner that the side wall surface 109f of the guide groove 109a is formed to meet the another side wall surface 109e" and "[i]n this case, the guide pin 103d travels in accordance with the configuration of the guide groove. . ." Thus, in this modification, the facing surfaces of the guide groove 109a would together act to rotate the lens cover ring in the opposite directions.

Thus, in the Naruse, et al. patent there is only one guide portion, i.e., the guide groove 109f of the tapered segment 109d, or the facing surfaces of the guide groove 109a, which functions to rotate the driving member or key ring 103 in one direction and the opposite direction. Moreover, nothing is said in the Naruse, et al. patent as to the lengths of the side walls of the of the tapered segment 109b, the lens cover close guide member 109b and the lens cover open guide member 109c.

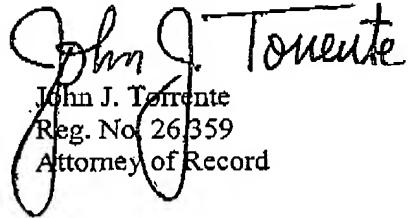
The Naruse, et al. patent, therefore, fails to teach or suggest a barrel that has a first guide portion that rotates a driving member or lens holding member in one direction, and a second guide portion that rotates the driving member or lens holding member in the other direction relative to a position change with the driving member or lens holding member, let alone that the length of the first guide portion in the direction of the optical axis be shorter than that of the second guide portion. Moreover, the patent fails to teach or suggest a barrel having a first guide portion and a second guide portion wherein the first guide portion is formed along the second guide portion and the length of the first guide portion in the direction of the optical axis is shorter than that of the second guide portion.

Applicant's amended independent claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 11, and their respective dependent claims, all of which recite one or more of such features, thus patentably distinguish over the Naruse, et al. patent.

In view of the above, it is submitted applicant's' claims, as amended, patentably distinguish over the cited art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



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